

1 CLAIMS

2 1. A method for processing mail items, comprising the steps of:
3 separating said mail items into an envelope batch and a contents batch;
4 applying a first set of labels to said envelope batch, said first set of labels further
5 comprising a first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters;
6 applying a second set of labels to said contents batch, said second set of labels further
7 comprising said first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters;
8 scanning envelopes in said envelope batch and generating a first list of alpha-numeric
9 characters read from said first set of labels, and images of the envelopes in said envelope batch;
10 scanning contents pages in said contents batch and generating a second list of alpha-
11 numeric characters read from said second set of labels, and images of the contents pages in said
12 contents batch; and
13 merging said envelope images with said contents pages images having common alpha-
14 numeric characters so as to create a combined mail item image for each said mail item.

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16 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
17 prior to said step of merging said envelope images with said contents pages images,
18 comparing said first and second lists of alpha-numeric characters to identify individual alpha-
19 numeric characters present in only one of said envelope batch and said contents batch.

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21 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

1 after said comparing step, generating a database report indicating any occurrences of
2 alpha-numeric characters being present in only one of said envelope batch and said contents
3 batch.

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5 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

6 after said comparing step, displaying only said envelope images and said contents pages
7 images that include an image of said labels.

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9 5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

10 prior to said step of applying a second set of labels to said contents batch, inserting a
11 blank page in at least one of said contents batches, said step of applying a second set of labels to
12 said contents batch further comprising applying a label from said second set of labels to said
13 blank page.

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15 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

16 prior to said step of displaying said images, sorting said images based upon image file
17 size and selecting for display those images of a file size generally equal to an image of said blank
18 page bearing only a label.

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20 7. The method of claim 1, said first set of labels further comprising at least one alpha-
21 numeric character identifying said first set of labels as envelope batch labels, and said second set
22 of labels further comprising at least one alpha-numeric character identifying said second set of
23 labels as contents batch labels.

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2 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

3 prior to said separating step, sorting said mail items into groups having common envelope
4 sizes.

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6 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of printing said first and second
7 sets of labels interspersed with one another in order of their alpha-numeric characters.

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9 10. The method of claim 1, wherein said steps of applying said first and second sets of
10 labels further comprise sequentially applying one of said labels from said first set of labels
11 having an alpha-numeric designation, followed by applying one of said labels from said second
12 said of labels having the same alpha-numeric designation, and continuing said sequential
13 application of said labels for all envelopes in said envelop batch and all contents pages in said
14 contents batch.

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16 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

17 transmitting to an intended recipient of said mail article said combined mail item image.

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19 12. A system for processing mail items, comprising:

20 a scanner; and

21 a control program operative on a microprocessor in electrical communication with said
22 scanner, said control program being operative to print a first set of labels comprising a first

1 sequential series of alpha-numeric characters and a second set of labels comprising said first
2 sequential series of alpha-numeric characters, said control program being further operative to:
3 receive a first list of alpha-numeric characters read from said first sequential
4 series of alpha-numeric characters and images of envelopes associated with said first
5 sequential series of alpha-numeric characters;
6 receive a second list of alpha-numeric characters read from said second sequential
7 series of alpha-numeric characters and images of contents pages associated with said
8 second sequential series of alpha-numeric characters; and
9 merge said envelope images with said contents pages images having common
10 alpha-numeric characters so as to create a combined mail item image for each said mail
11 item.

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13 13. The system of claim 12, said control program being further operative to compare said
14 first and second lists of alpha-numeric characters to identify individual alpha-numeric characters
15 present in only one of said first and second lists.

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17 14. The system of claim 13, said control program being further operative to generate a
18 database report indicating any occurrences of alpha-numeric characters being present in only one
19 of said first and second lists.

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21 15. The system of claim 13, said control program being further operative to display only
22 said envelope images and said contents pages images that include an image of one of said alpha-
23 numeric characters.

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2 16. The system of claim 12, said control program being further operative to transmit to
3 an intended recipient of said mail article said combined mail item image.

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